4:Altschuler E-5 (1959-1960) 1965
SD6 Cayapa SD6

about twelve years earlier. Off to one side in a small cubicle, a minor commotion was in progress. I walked over and saw a group of women standing around a woman who was seated with her back to me. When I asked what was happening, I was met with a burst of laughter and giggles. Men who were approached grinned and said that it "was an affair of the women." Perhaps an hour later, I returned to the cubicle and watched the seated woman grasp and twist a piece of cloth that had been suspended from one of the rafters. An old crone was serving as the mid-wife. The actual birth took place during one of my periodic absences to watch the festivities which were going on unabated. A few curious children and some women were the only by-standers.

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Elderly women are generally the mid-wives, but there are a few men who ply the trade on occasion. The mid-wife knows enough to manipulate the unborn child to a good birth position, which is done by massaging and kneading on the abdomen. Most births are normal and fairly easy. It is said that if the child is born with its arms akimbo, then the mother will die.

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4:Altschuler E-5 (1959-1960) 1965
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by snakes and also by design. Women frequently die in childbirth; tuberculosis runs rampant, and periodically whooping cough and measles decimate the population. People die from spirit possession, soul loss, witchcraft, illness, and accidents; however, very old people "just die." People are afraid of death although it is maintained that no one dies because of his sins. Punishment takes place after death, and everyone must be purified of his sins by punishment after his demise. It is believed that when the Whites die their souls go to the white clouds while those of the Negroes go to the black clouds. Only the Cayapa may enter heaven.

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When death strikes, all relatives within a few hours' travel are notified. The immediate family clean the body, if necessary, and place it on a mat. Water is boiled and then poured over the area where the body lay last. Two or three men of the neighborhood are asked to prepare a coffin; this coffin which is made of bamboo is said to be the "canoe of the soul" and is called /úhkuŋgúle/. Its construction involves four or five hours' work, and when it is completed, the parent or spouse of the deceased offers

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the coffinmakers a gift of two or three liters of rum which is consumed on the spot. If the deceased is a woman, her husband goes through her belongings and sets aside items that are especially attractive and/or expensive, and these are later auctioned off at the funeral. The money received in this manner is used to pay for special masses for the dead. Finally when all is in readiness, the body is placed in the coffin. The funeral is held at a house that is on the main river to facilitate the final removal of the body to the ceremonial center for burial. The coffin is placed in a canoe which is piloted by a close male relative: father, husband, brother, etcetera. The pilot sets out alone with the corpse for the funeral site.

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One day I received word that the wife of Aurelio Añapa had just died from the bite of a venomous snake. She had been attended by a brujo for a period of four days to no avail. The following morning at about two o'clock, we heard faintly the mourning chant of the Cayapa. Slowly the sound came closer, and far up the river a light was moving steadily. Finally, after what appeared to us to be an interminably long time, Aurelio

came close to our house. He cried out, wailing in the Cayapa manner, "Here is the house of Don Miltón where we used to go together; it gives me pain to think that we will no longer go there, ay . . ." At this he passed by our house, and we could hear him call out landmarks that were familiar to him and to his wife--landmarks that they would no longer see together. Finally he moved out of sight and out of hearing. We were quite disturbed over this, not only because she was a friend, but also because we had an ample supply of antivenom and had not been notified of the snakebite when we might have helped her. People were saying that Aurelio did not hire effective <u>brujos</u>. They said that the ones he hired were known to be ignorant of snakebite curing. Aurelio had been married for about ten years and had no children. His wife gave birth once prematurely, and the child died; ever since this, unfortunately, she had been sterile. This was a great sadness to them, for they wanted children very much. When I asked others why Aurelio had never adopted children, the answer always was, "He wants his own blood."

Funerals tend to begin late in the afternoon,